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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
11 June 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Insurgency in Laos, South Vietnam and
Iran

1. Laos

a. Communist military activity in the Plaine des Jarres has decreased, although the Communists are still maintaining pressure against neutralist positions to the south along Route 4 and to the north at Lat Bouak. Capture of positions in these areas would permit the Communists to move against Kong Le's headquarters at Muong Phan and his rear base at Muong Kheung.

b. In south-central Laos, the neutralist position has further deteriorated. The Kong Le battalion at Muong Phine was previously evacuated under threat of Pathet Lao attack and contact has apparently been lost with this unit. The Pathet Lao have also demanded the evacuation of the Kong Le battalion from Mahaxay and there are indications that neutralist regional headquarters at Nhommarath may be withdrawn northward. Further neutralist withdrawals appear likely, and the entire eastern portion of south-central Laos may soon be in Communist hands.

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c. Souvanna and Souphanouvong have still not agreed on conditions for further talks, and prospects for negotiations remain poor. Souvanna, in a strong public statement, has accused North Vietnam of sending both troops and war materiel into Laos.

2. South Vietnam

a. Viet Cong military attacks have been at a higher rate for the past two weeks, but do not

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reflect any change in Communist capabilities or patterns of activity.

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b. The government's conflict with the Buddhists remains serious; there are no signs that the government intends fully to meet Buddhist demands, although it is exploring areas for further concessions.

3. Iran

a. Urban Riots - The rioting that took place in Tehran, Qom, and Shiraz on 5 and 6 June was instigated by a clique of conservative religious leaders (mullahs) of Iran's dominant Shia sect, who violently oppose land reform and the emancipation of women--key features of the Shah's reform program. The mullahs doubtless obtained financial assistance from the landowning class. Iranian officials have also charged Nasir with complicity in the outbreak, probably without real cause.

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Khomeini's arrest of 5 June set off a series of protest demonstrations in Tehran and its suburbs, and in the large shrine cities of Qom and Shiraz. These demonstrations were well planned and organized, and were evidently intended to produce a complete breakdown of public order.

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Meanwhile, the agitators had mobilized a large number of bazaar idlers and slum dwellers from south Tehran. Crowds headed for major targets, such as the radio station, government buildings, and Tehran University, where they hoped to link up with mobs of student rioters.

The city police were committed early in the disturbances, but were quickly outmatched, having only the cadets from the police academy as a reserve. The commander of the Tehran military garrison immediately committed his troops, but also found he needed a reserve. An additional battalion was brought in from outside the city.

Once committed, the troops performed well. It had been feared that they might refuse to fire on the crowds, but there was no difficulty in this respect. In one instance, when a detachment cordoning off a street was rushed by a crowd, the troops fired into the mob, killing and wounding a large number. However, they generally behaved with restraint, firing over the heads of the crowds and keeping casualties to a minimum.

The overwhelming use of military force broke up the demonstrations, and after a brief renewal of skirmishing on the morning of 6 June, order was restored in Tehran. Similar rioting and counteraction took place in Qom and Shiraz on 5 June.

Curfew and martial law regulations have been strictly applied in Tehran, and the arrest of Khomeini and his cohorts has deprived the mullah group of valuable leadership. However, some new leaders are appearing and calling for a renewal of the struggle. They may attempt further disturbances. The government forces available

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should suffice to maintain general order in the city.

The religious fanatics do not appear to have enough public support throughout the country to seize control of any other important towns. In their bitterness and desperation, however, they may well attempt sabotage or isolated terrorist attacks. The danger of assassination attempts against the Shah and other government officials is also increased. Furthermore, if Khomeini is executed, ill feeling against the Shah will be aggravated.

b. Tribal Insurgency - The assassination (by his brother) of Abdollah Zarghampur, the prime mover in the tribal troubles, leaves only one active leader of a tribal group of guerrilla fighters in the southwest. This is Nasir Taheri, a minor khan of the Boir Ahmadi tribe. His forces, probably numbering about fifty, are split up, and may be attempting to escape to Iraq or Qatar. Most of the other tribal chiefs have submitted to the military authorities, and the government will now be able to turn more attention to the brigandage and highway robbery that has plagued the Shiraz area for several months. Although this is largely carried out by Qashqai bands, there is no reason to think that it is politically motivated.

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